



Puget Sound/ Georgia Basin Shared Waters Program

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Problem Definition

Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia are three parts of a single ecological unit—the inland marine waters of Washington and British Columbia. Many people refer to these waters as the Salish Sea. Fish, birds and other marine life pass freely through these shared waters. However, human activities must be managed throughout the entire system to protect the shared resources.

Northwest Straits Commission. British Columbia and Canada are represented by federal and provincial agencies and representatives of the Salish Sea Council.

The Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force works to protect the marine system through information exchanges, partnerships, and cooperative policy review and recommendations. The task force has addressed protecting nearshore habitat, establishing marine protected areas, protecting marine plant and animal populations, and minimizing the introduction of non-native species.

Institutional Framework

The governor of Washington and premier of British Columbia created the Environmental Cooperation Council in 1992 to address a wide range of shared environmental issues between the state of Washington and the province of British Columbia. In 1993, the council formed the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force to address protection of the inland marine waters. As of fall 2000, Task Force membership from Washington includes several state and federal agencies, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and the

A number of partnerships have been formed to work on Puget Sound/Georgia Basin issues. San Juan County and the Islands Trust have partnered to work on issues of mutual concern, including marine protected areas. The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team and the Puget Sound Council have partnered with the Fraser Basin Council to exchange information and expertise and to undertake joint projects. Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency have also signed a Statement of Cooperation to work on Puget Sound/Georgia Basin issues.

What does “shall” mean?

The Action Team has determined that the actions in this plan are needed to protect and restore Puget Sound. Consistent with the importance of these actions, this plan says that appropriate implementers “shall” perform the actions. However, implementation of many of these actions is a long-term process. The Action Team’s work plans will identify the actions that need to be taken each biennium to implement this management plan. Implementation of actions in the work plans is subject to the availability of funds and public input into the decision-making processes of implementing entities. When an action is included in a biennial work plan, the Action Team expects that it will be implemented in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Puget Sound management plan, in accordance with Chapter 90.71 RCW.

Program Goal

To promote and coordinate efforts in Washington and British Columbia in order to ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the shared resources of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin marine and estuarine ecosystem.

Program Strategy

The strategy to achieve the goal is for the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force to coordinate and recommend policies and actions to protect the shared marine waters, to encourage cross-border partnerships and to measure progress through performance measures and adjust the program as needed.

Program Elements

PS/GB-1. Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force

To provide a forum for transboundary cooperation on protection of the inland marine waters, federal, state, local, tribal and other organizations will participate on the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force. The Task Force will:

- a. Research issues affecting the shared marine waters;
- b. Adopt joint policies and implementing actions;
- c. Provide for cross-border exchanges of information; and
- d. Form work groups, as appropriate, to address issues of mutual interest.

PS/GB-2. Transboundary Partnerships and Exchanges

Federal, tribal, state and local governments and nongovernmental groups are encouraged to exchange information and expertise with partners across the border, undertake joint projects and enter into cross-border agreements. An example of an existing cross-border agreement is the statement of cooperation between the Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada.

PS/GB-3. Measuring Program Effectiveness

The Puget Sound Action Team support staff shall facilitate evaluation of program results by evaluating program and environmental performance measures. This supports the adaptive management approach described in the Estuary Management Program of this management plan. At a minimum, these evaluations should incorporate information from the following monitoring and assessment sources.

- a. Program measures that track implementation of this program:
 - Continuation of the Task Force.
 - Partnerships supported by the Task Force.
- b. Case studies that assess the effectiveness of program actions:
 - Adoption and implementation of selected recommendations of the Task Force.